# Paralympic gold medallist Megan Giglia faces housing crisis amid Stockport’s social accommodation shortfall



Megan Giglia, a celebrated Paralympic gold medalist, is facing profound challenges as she navigates the complexities of finding suitable accommodation in Stockport. After her remarkable gold victory at the Rio 2016 Paralympics, Giglia's life took an unexpected turn when she was faced with homelessness following a no-fault eviction from her rental home last year. This ordeal led her to describe her experience as a "mental breakdown," reflecting the psychological toll that housing instability can inflict, even on those who have achieved significant success.

In March of this year, after being forced to leave her home, Giglia and her son found themselves living in a hotel while they sought assistance from Stockport Homes, the local social housing provider. The situation highlights a broader crisis in Stockport, where the demand for social housing is exceptionally high—over 9,000 applicants are vying for fewer than 600 available properties. The local council has indicated that some families could wait up to 12 years for suitable housing.

Despite finally receiving the keys to a flat in Pendlebury Towers on May 12, Giglia quickly expressed concerns about her safety and the suitability of the property. "I broke down when I first saw it; I just went quiet, it was very overwhelming,” she admitted. Following a medical assessment, Stockport Homes acknowledged her need for level access accommodation, yet Giglia believes that the options presented to her do not meet her needs adequately. “I’m being told what my choice is,” she lamented, illustrating the often disempowering nature of navigating social housing systems, particularly for individuals with disabilities.

The challenges Giglia faces are not isolated. Many individuals with specific needs encounter hurdles in securing adequate housing, a situation exacerbated by a national housing crisis. Reports indicate that only 7% of homes in England meet basic accessibility criteria, creating significant barriers for those requiring additional support, such as wheelchair access or housing for families with pets.

The struggles within the housing system are compounded by the increasing demand for affordable homes across the country. Last year alone, over 2,300 households in Stockport sought homelessness assistance, representing a 22% rise from the previous year. The council has resorted to using bed and breakfasts and temporary accommodations to manage the crisis, underscoring the urgent need for systemic intervention and increased support for vulnerable populations.

Mental health services in Greater Manchester are also pivotal in addressing the needs of those at risk of homelessness. The Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust operates a Housing Advice Service, which collaborates with care teams to facilitate suitable housing options for individuals during their recovery journeys. However, the existing demand highlights a critical need for a more robust framework to ensure that dynamic support structures are in place.

The case of Megan Giglia serves as a poignant reminder of the repercussions of a deteriorating housing system. Her journey, enriched by resilience and advocacy for disabled individuals, sheds light on the pressing need for policy changes and improved housing solutions that honour the dignity and rights of all, regardless of their circumstances or past achievements.

The crisis surrounding social housing reflects a much larger issue that extends beyond Stockport, calling for urgent attention and action from national and local governments to address the systemic shortcomings plaguing the housing sector. As demand continues to outstrip supply, the hope for a sustainable solution remains a challenge that our society must collectively address.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1 - [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420), [[2]](https://www.manchesterworld.uk/news/people/im-a-team-gb-paralympic-gold-medal-winner-and-im-on-the-brink-of-homelessness-after-being-evicted-in-march-5082914)
2. Paragraph 2 - [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420), [[2]](https://www.manchesterworld.uk/news/people/im-a-team-gb-paralympic-gold-medal-winner-and-im-on-the-brink-of-homelessness-after-being-evicted-in-march-5082914)
3. Paragraph 3 - [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420)
4. Paragraph 4 - [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420), [[6]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/thousands-greater-manchester-kids-bbs-28289070.amp)
5. Paragraph 5 - [[7]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/whats-happening-stockport-cant-go-28759563)
6. Paragraph 6 - [[4]](https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/housing-advice-service)
7. Paragraph 7 - [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420), [[6]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/thousands-greater-manchester-kids-bbs-28289070.amp)
8. Paragraph 8 - [[1]](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/paralympics-star-suffered-mental-breakdown-31686420> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.manchesterworld.uk/news/people/im-a-team-gb-paralympic-gold-medal-winner-and-im-on-the-brink-of-homelessness-after-being-evicted-in-march-5082914> - Paralympic gold medalist Megan Giglia faced homelessness after a no-fault eviction from her Stockport home in March. She and her son sought assistance from Stockport Homes, staying in a hotel while applying for social housing. Despite her achievements, Giglia encountered challenges in securing suitable accommodation, highlighting the difficulties faced by individuals with specific needs in the housing system. Stockport Homes acknowledged the distressing situation and emphasized the high demand for social housing in the area, with over 9,000 applicants and fewer than 600 properties available last year.
3. <https://www.onestockport.co.uk/2021/06/in-bike-week-we-spoke-to-para-olympian-gold-medal-winner-megan-giglia/> - In an interview during Bike Week, Megan Giglia discussed her journey to becoming a Paralympic gold medalist. After a stroke and brain hemorrhage in 2013, she took up cycling to aid her recovery. Giglia shared insights into her training, the support she received, and her aspirations for the Tokyo Olympics. She emphasized the importance of resilience and finding purpose after life-changing events, highlighting her dedication to raising awareness for children in care and inspiring others to pursue their dreams despite challenges.
4. <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/housing-advice-service> - The Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust offers a Housing Advice Service to support individuals with accommodation needs during their inpatient episodes. The service collaborates with care coordinators and multidisciplinary teams to identify suitable housing options and address complex discharge issues. Housing advisors work closely with community teams and housing providers to ensure a consensus on accommodation and support needs, aiming to prevent homelessness and ensure sustainable discharge plans for service users.
5. <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/homeless-services> - Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust provides a range of trauma-informed mental health and dual diagnosis services for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness across Greater Manchester. These services support people who are street homeless, in transient accommodation, or at risk of becoming homeless due to their current housing situation. The trust works alongside public and third-sector providers to address the holistic needs of this population, including health and social care needs, aiming to support individuals out of homelessness.
6. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/thousands-greater-manchester-kids-bbs-28289070.amp> - An analysis revealed that thousands of children in Greater Manchester are facing homelessness, with Manchester alone having 3,926 children in temporary accommodation. The report highlighted the acute shortage of affordable homes, leading to families being placed in temporary accommodations for extended periods. Shelter emphasized the housing emergency, noting that nearly half of families in temporary accommodation have been there for over two years, underscoring the need for increased support and intervention to address the crisis.
7. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/whats-happening-stockport-cant-go-28759563> - Stockport is experiencing a housing crisis, with a significant increase in homelessness due to a lack of housing and high private sector rents. In 2022/23, 2,300 households sought homelessness assistance, a 22% rise from the previous year. The council has been using bed and breakfasts and providing temporary accommodation to address the escalating crisis. The report emphasizes the need for intervention and increased support to address the housing shortage and its impact on residents.